

SCENIC DRIVES IN NEVADA, UTAH, AND COLORADO

The photos in this report are from the multiple long drives we did on this trip to get to different hiking areas and scenic locations. These include:

Day 1: Nevada's Highway 50 ("The Loneliest Road in America"), west to east.

Day 2: Utah's Highway 70 through the San Rafael Swell, then south to Hanksville and across through Glen Canyon to Bears Ears National Monument (see trip report on Mule Canyon Towers).

Day 3: North from Blanding to Monticello, then east into Colorado and north to Slick Rock. Then east towards Ouray, and south to Durango.

Days 4, 5, 6: Hiking near Durango, CO (see trip reports for the Colorado Trail northwest of Little Molas Lake, Coal Bank Pass trail to near Engineer Mountain, and the Snowdon Meadows area).

Day 7: West from Durango to Mancos, then northwest to Dolores and on to Monticello. North to Moab and then Hwy 70 across to the Hanksville turnoff. South to Hanksville, and west through Capitol Reef to Torrey.

Day 8: Northwest from Torrey to Delta, then west to Great Basin National Park (see trip report on Great Basin Bristlecone Pines).

Day 9: Nevada's Highway 50 again, east to west.

This photo is of the San Rafael Swell from an airplane flight across the country taken in July of 2017. Notice that the San Rafael Reef is prominently visible.



The next ten photos are from our drive across Nevada's Highway 50 on our way to Great Basin National Park. They are in correct sequential order (west to east), but I don't recall exactly where each was taken.





This photo is of what appears to be a (very large) mining operation we saw near the road just before reaching Ely, Nevada.



Looking west towards the Schell Creek Range (part of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest) from near the turnoff to the Osceola Ghost Town before reaching Great Basin National Park.



Interesting rock formations near Sacramento Pass, before reaching the turnoff to Baker, NV.



Wheeler Peak is just barely visible in the center of this photo.



The next photos are of the interesting scenery between the turnoff for Great Basin National Park and Delta, Utah, along Hwy 70 in Utah. Observe that some of the rock formations are surprisingly reminiscent of Death Valley.





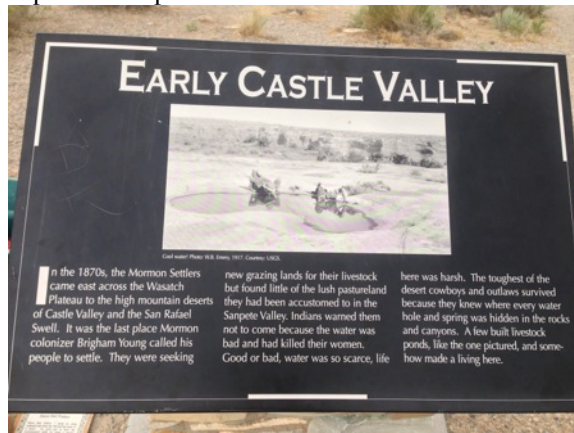
Here are some reddish hills between Scipio and Salina, in the Pahvant Range. I think I recall flying over this area earlier in July and wondering where in Utah these reddish hills were.



Two photos of very interesting formations at the far western side of the San Rafael Swell.



The Castle Valley viewpoint is a very nice place to stop on the drive across the San Rafael Swell.



Panorama of the very nice view of the western San Rafael Swell. Notice the mountains visible to the far right in this photo.



Looking south from here towards what I'm guessing are the Henry Mountains.



Looking southwest towards a massive rainstorm near Capitol Reef. We had driven through this rainstorm on our way from Salina to here.



Taking a closer look at the the rainstorm.



We spotted this interesting slot-like canyon near the main highway.



I think this photo was taken near the San Rafael Knob. There are many of these dome-like rock formations throughout this part of the San Rafael Swell.



The Ghost Rock View area looks like a great place to stop; unfortunately, we missed it on this trip.



More interesting rock formations north of the main road.



This is the uplifted part of the San Rafael Reef I had spotted from airplane earlier in July.



Here we are heading south towards Hanksville.



Looking across at the nice views we are getting of the San Rafael Swell through here.



Heading southwest towards Hanksville. I think the mountains visible in the distance are the Henry Mountains.



These two prominent rock formations are kind of like miniature versions of ones seen in Australia, and are located near the turnoff for Goblin Valley State Park.



So far we had managed to avoid encountering another rainstorm, although the clouds remained nearby.



Two photos looking west towards Capitol Reef, which we would be visiting later in the trip.



Here we have passed Hanksville and turned off for Glen Canyon and Bears Ears National Monument. The Henry Mountains are visible in this photo.



The road descends through an impressive canyon on the way to the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.



This is our first view of Lake Powell on this drive.



We stopped at an overlook before descending towards the town of Hite and the Hite Bridge.



Informative signs at this viewpoint tell about Powell's expedition, the Glen Canyon Dam, and the town of Hite (now under water).



Looking south down the Colorado River from here.



Another panorama from this impressive viewpoint.



The Hite Bridge is just barely visible crossing the canyon to the right in this photo.



Looking northwest and back the way we had driven in from Hanksville.



From the viewpoint, the road descends impressively towards the lake. This must have been an even more impressive area before the Glen Canyon Dam was created.



Looking south down this part of Lake Powell.



There are many interesting rock formations in this area, which isn't surprising considering how close we are to Canyonlands, Arches, etc. There must be a lot of amazing hiking to do here.



There appears to also be numerous water-filled slot canyons, which are visible from the main road.



A smaller version of the Hite Bridge, located shortly before crossing the real Hite Bridge, can just barely be seen to the left in this photo (the silver color of the bridge blends in with the yellow rock).



Looking northeast up what I think is called Cataract Canyon. I recall reading that there are some nice slot canyons in this area, which I hope to check out someday.



Here we are crossing the Dirty Devil River on the bridge in the photograph two above.



Looking down from this bridge.



Now we are crossing the Colorado River on the Hite Bridge .



There is a nice view of the river from this bridge.



Past Glen Canyon, the scenery changed slightly as we approached Bears Ears National Monument.



There were many scenic things to stop and see along the road here, but unfortunately we didn't have much time as we were driving from Ely, NV to Blanding, UT on this day.



The Bears Ears Buttes are visible in the center of this photo.



Here we are descending into what I think is called Cottonwood Wash, shortly after leaving Bears Ears National Monument.



Notice the small notch the road cuts through to the left in this photo.



This is an impressive stretch of road here.



The next two photos were taken near Slick Rock, in Colorado.



Here we are approaching Ridgway, Colorado.



The mountain scenery in this area south of Ridgway, seen in the next four photos, is very impressive.





Here we are heading south from Ridgway to Ouray.



We briefly visited the Cascade Falls Trail in Ouray. Note that the parking for this trail is limited and very steep, so I would recommend considering parking in town for this hike. I think we are looking across at Oak Creek here. There is a lot of hiking I hope to do in this area someday.



According to this sign, there are 6 more waterfalls above Cascade Falls.



This sign informs visitors that much of the town of Ouray is in a flash flood zone.



Looking down the (very steep!) trail and road back to Ouray. I think one can hike to the top of the peak visible across the valley.



This map shows visitors some of the numerous trails in this area.

